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Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 03097 181032 Z

16
ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 DPW-01 OMB-01 AID-20 EA-11

SR-02 ORM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

RSR-01 /155 W
---------- 099604
P R 180916 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8815
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 1111

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E. O. 11652 N/ A
TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, BG
SUBJECT: PAKISTANI REACTION TO INDO- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION

REF: STATE 71936

SUMMARY: INITIAL GOP REACTION TO APRIL 17 INDO- BANGLADESH PROPOSAL ON RETURN OF PAK POWS HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS BUT HOPEFUL. GOP SPOKESMEN SEE DELINKING OF POW RETURN FROM PAK RECOGNITION BANGLADESH AS SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD BUT HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER WAR CRIMES TRIALS. PROVISION RE TRANSFER OF BIHARIS TO PAKISTAN ALSO LIKELY TO BE PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. GOP- CONTROLLED PRESS HAS REACTED CAUTIOUSLY BUT FAVORABLY TO APRIL 17 INDO- BANGLADESH JOINT DECLARATION.
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FRONT PAGE NEWS STORIES ON DECLARATION EMPHASIZED FACT THAT GOI AND GBD HAVE DROPPED PAK RECOGNITION BANGLA-DESH AS PRECONDITION FOR RELEASE OF POWS. ARTICLES NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT DELHI HAD REITEREATED ITS DECISION HAND OVER TO DACCA UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF POWS FOR " SO- CALLED WAR CRIMES TRIALS". OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN DE-CLINED COMMENT PUBLICLY ON JOINT DECLARATION, SAYING HE WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT FULL TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED WIRE SERVICE, HOWEVER, QF TO THE SOUTHWEST. ALONG THE ROUTE, HE SAW MORE NEW ROADS THAN HE EX-PECTED; ONE MILE PAST KHE SANH HE SAW AN INTERSECTION WITH ONE ROAD GOING SOUTH AND AN ADDITIONAL ROAD GOING DUE WEST. HE BE-LIEVED THE " SOUTHWESTERLY" ROAD, RATHER THAN THE WESTERLY ROAD, WAS THE CONTINUATION OF ROUTE 9. HE DID NOT LOOK FOR A NEW ROAD BECAUSE HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR EXACTLY.

2. CANDEL COLONEL MACLEOD, THE ROUGHEST AND MOST ASTUTE OF THE INTERROGATORS ON THE PANEL, SHOWED HOTCHKISS A 1:50,000 SCALE AND POINTED OUT THAT AT THE INTERSECTION, ROUTE 9 MAKES A DEFINITE TURN TO THE WEST AND UNLESS A RIGHT TURN IS MADE AT THAT POINT, THE AIRCRAFT WOULD MISS ROUTE 9 AND HEAD SOUTH THEN SOUTMGEST. HOTCHKISS ADMITTED THAT THIS WAS NOT IMPOSSIBLE, BUT HE WAS STILL CONVINCED THEY FOLLOWED THE CORRECT ROAD , AND THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE HEADED IN EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION WITHOUT NOTICING THE ERROR. HOTCHKISS ADMITTED HE HAD NEVER CHECKED THE COMPASS BECAUSE #115 HAD NO NAVIGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THE AIR-CRAFT WERE BEING FLOWN BY PILOTAGE NOT INSTRUMENTATION. MACLEOD OBSERVED THAT ALTHOUGH THEY WERE FLYING BY PILOTAGE, HOTCHKISS HAD BEEN UNABLE TO IDENTIFY A SINGLE LANDMARK PAST KHE SANH OTHER THAN THE ROAD WHICHI OTCHKISS INSISTED WAS TOUTE 9.

3. THE FLIGHT ENGINEER OF 115, ALFORQUE, WAS QUESTIONED FOR ONE HOUR BUT ADDED VIITUALLY NOTHING TO THE PANEL' S STORE OF EVIDENCE. AT NO TIME DURING THE FLIGHT, EXCEPT WHEN HE HEARD THE 115

PILOT GIVE A POSITION REPORT AT KHE SANHCIJ WAS ALFORQUE CERTAIN OF THE AIRCRAFT' S LOCATION. HE HAD NO IDEA IF THEY WERE FOLLOW-ING ROUTE 9 OR NOT AND HE SAW #006 BRIEFLY WHEN IT MADE ITS INITIAL EVASIVE MANUEVER.

4. BEFORE THE QUESTIONING BEGAN ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 17, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICCS AIR SERVICES, JACK BARNHISEL, MADE A BRIEF STATEMENT TO THE PANEL TO THE EFFECT THAT HIS COMPANY' S CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICIAL POSITION IS THAT THEY RECOGNIZE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS DOWN AT A POSITION OTHER THAN WHERE THE COMPANY

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ORIGINALLY THOUGHT. THEY CONCEDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE AIR-
CRAFT WERE OFF COURSE, PERHAPS INADVERTANTLY MISDIRECTED BY THE
PRG NAVIGATOR. HOWEVER, BARNHISEL HOPED THE PANEL WOULD RESERVE
JUDGEMENT UNTIL IT HAS CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE SUCH AS RECOVERY OF THE
AIRCRAFT, AERIAL OBSERVATION OR AN UPDATED MAP. (POLOFF COMMENT:
AS IT BECOMES INCREASINGLY LIKELY THAT THE AIRCRAFT TOOK THE
WRONG TURN, THE BIASES OF THE RESPECTIVE ICCS DELEGATIONS BE-
COME LESS NOTICEABLE. NO DELEGATION HAS A MONOPOLY ON PROVINVO
THE AIRCRAFT WERE OFF COURSE AND EXCEPT FOR THE CANADIANS WHO
WANT" TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS NO MATTER WHAT", THE QUESTION-
ING HAS BEEN RESTRAINED. ONLY THE HUNGARIANS SEEM TO HAVE
TUNNEL VISION WITH RESPECT TO LINES OF QUESTIONING. ALMOST EVERY
QUESTION THEY ASK IS AIMED AT ESTABLISHING THAT THE CAUSE OF THE
CRASH, WHEREVER IT MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE, WAS CAUSED BY ANYTHING
BUT A MISSILE. HOWEVER, THEY ARE LOW- KEY, SIMPLY ACCEPTING WHAT-
EVER ANSWER IS OFFERED WITHOUT PRESSING THE POINT. MACLEOD KEEPS
SAYING HE DOESNT WANT TO BULLY THE WITNESS, BUT HE INVARIABLY
COMES CLOSE. END COMMENT.)
BROWN UNQUOTE BUNBER

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